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Dear Senator Harp and Representative Geragosian and members of the Appropriations Committee:

The Connecticut Lodging Association is fully supportive of the Connecticut Tourism Regions and asks that their limited funding be maintained

Tourism is an essential economic driver for the well being of Connecticut.

The tourism regions are extremely important to hotel and lodging business and their efforts are an important underpinning of the Connecticut lodging industry's marketing.

The tourism regions tell the story of Connecticut's diverse culture, history and adventure. Without the tourism regions, Connecticut's economic viability will be hurt. The lodging industry is already reeling from the recession and will be further threatened, creating additional lay offs while raising the specter of business failures. The lodging industry needs the ongoing marketing by the tourism regions.

- Culture and tourism activities account for over \$14 billion in Connecticut economic activity each year.
- 170,000 jobs – 10% of the Connecticut labor force - \$9.4 billion of personal income - \$1.7 billion of state and local revenues depend on culture and tourism.
- Many employees whose jobs depend on the culture and tourism industry are the most vulnerable in a declining economy. Losing their jobs will increase the demand and cost for other state and local support services.
- Quality of life in Connecticut is rated among the best in the United States. Quality of life based on our cultural, historic and entertainment opportunities attracts people and businesses who select Connecticut above other states. Preserving our quality of life through our investment in culture and tourism is a key to rebuilding our economic future.
- Numerous state, regional and national studies show that unless an investment is made to sustain the culture and tourism economy, it will decline rapidly. In the past, \$9.30 in net state and local revenue was leveraged by each \$1.00 invested.
- For the past 15 years, Connecticut has invested millions of dollars in the culture and tourism infrastructure. Without support, many of these organizations and institutions are likely to fail and thereby negating the investments previously made.

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